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Keynote Address to Seapower Symposium: Change and Challenge

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In his keynote address to the Seapower Symposium at the Naval War College, Adm. Bernard A. Clarey highlighted the increase in Soviet maritime capability. This increase is especially significant in light of the growth of waterborne commerce and the possibility of obtaining important resources from the seabed. The growing economic interdependence of the free world makes control of the seas all the more vital and cooperation all the more essential.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS TO SEAPOWER SYMPOSIUM

Change and Challenge

by

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Historically, the maritime world has been the scene of constant evolution and change. Great nations and empires have frequently arisen from the adventurous activities of their seamen and traders, and almost all of the great powers of history have developed formidable seapower to sustain their growth and influence. Change and Challenge—fitting terms to be applied to the sea, for those of us who have plied them from the beginning of our careers recognize the ever-changing modes of the sea and the ever-present challenge it poses to the most accomplished of mariners.

As the changes in the barometer forecast the mode of the sea, so do the changes in the maritime nations foretell of the future of the world.

It is not the fact of change which concerns us—for is it not in the nature of the sea to be the catalyst of change--but rather the implications of the change which solicit our interests.

Since the early 1950's, a fundamental alteration in the balance of maritime strength and potential has been in progress within the community of nations. The realities of post-World War II political, social, economic, and strategic pressures have dictated shifts of seaborne influence, and those pressures continue to operate today in driving the national decisions of all nations toward or away from ascendancy on the seas. The changes associated with the situation include the development of significant advances in the application of technology to ship and weapon design and development. In all our navies, we have moved toward changing quantity for quality and military effectiveness, and I am sure that each of you is aware of the extent to which this trend has been carried out. In the case of the U.S. Navy, this philosophy has been reflected by our move toward modernization and high quality by eliminating deteriorating hulls and obsolete equipment. Thus, what might appear to represent an

overall decline in the combined and individual naval forces of the free world may more realistically be viewed as an improvement in capability at the expense of unit numbers.

But it remains an unpleasant fact that fewer units can exert influence in fewer places--quality and individual unit effectiveness all come to naught if a unit cannot be placed at the scene of interest at the proper time.

The single most significant change of this period has been the emergence of the Soviet Navy as an oceangoing, modern, professional force—a force which has demonstrated the capability to deploy and sustain surface and submarine forces in the farthest reaches of the world's oceans—a force which has successfully sustained over 60 combatant units in the Mediterranean—a force which specifically boasts its naval presence in the world's oceans.

The Soviet emphasis on naval weaponry, especially submarines and surface-to-surface missiles -its impressive increase in numbers—the apparent, technologically advanced design of its major units -and its new concepts of sustained deployments all point to the fact that the Soviets are achieving their long-sought goal of becoming one of the world's leading seapowers.

They have made a profound strategic decision to structure the Soviet Navy offensively and to use it to outflank containment by the West. This new naval strategy is orchestrated about and in harmony with the other factors of seapower long ago outlined by Mahan. The intensity of the Soviets' pursuits of seapower is reflected in their development of a maritime industrial base, the construction of large merchant and fishing fleets, and the expenditure of national resources in projecting maritime power. Their new and formidable navy is, and will remain, a major instrument of Soviet national policy.

In the face of this apparent fundamental shift in Soviet strategy, the free nations find themselves facing new challenges. A key element in binding an alliance together has been the clear perception by the partners of a common threat to each of them. Now, however, Soviet power is being manifested in a far more subtle and sophisticated manner than it was two decades ago. From their actions and statements, it appears that the Soviets believe the coordinated and graduated application of seapower can extend Soviet political, economic, and military power over a much wider range with far less direct risk to the Soviet homeland than could any other courses opened to them. The new Soviet maritime strategy must be looked at on a worldwide scale, and consideration of all facets of the Soviet move to sea is needed in order to understand the challenge.

For example, consider recent worldwide changes regarding ocean transports and fishing industries. Since 1950 total world oceanborne trade has quadrupled to approximately 2,000 million long tons per year. The advent of supersize tankers, bulk carriers, and large cargo vessels has given rise to a spectacular increase in total world deadweight tonnage. Now, in the face of this clear world trend toward ever-larger and more efficient vessels, it is interesting to consider the significant characteristics of the Soviet merchant fleet constructed during the same time frame.

Although the total numbers of Soviet merchant vessels have been considerably increased, the rise in total deadweight tonnage has been quite modest, a fact which runs quite opposite to the dictates of managerial efficiency. The smaller Soviet vessels, including many with specialized self-unloading equipment, are uniquely suited for trade in the smaller, less developed ports of the world. Thus, we can see in this circumstance another facet of the pervasive

comprehensive Soviet push for expanded influence worldwide through seapower.

The recent activities of the Soviet fishing fleets are well known to this audience. In conjunction with an extensive ocean sciences program, the Soviets are approaching commercial fishing as the source of protein which can be harvested scientifically. Although at this time the recorded Soviet annual fish catch is less than that of several free world fishing nations, the numbers of their vessels and their modern configuration and methods give them a growing capability to exceed existing production figures.

In the field of oceanography, it appears that the Soviet Union is devoting more technical and manpower resources to the scientific study and analysis of the seas than any combination of non-Communist states now at sea. The commercial and military implications of such a vast effort are clearly significant, particularly when the world's store of hard information about the oceans and seabed is so meager. When oceanic exploration and investigative efforts have gathered sufficient information to permit ordered exploration of the seas and seabeds, it is possible that free world nations will find themselves seriously handicapped through an "information gap" being widened daily by Soviet scientists and technicians.

The opportunities presented in the field of oceanic exploration suggest that there can and should be even greater cooperative efforts and exchange of information among free maritime nations.

A further change of real significance during the past two decades is the acceleration of economic interdependence which has been fostered by efficient seaborne trade. Strategic significance must be given to the really substantial interdependence among free world nations which has grown with this trade, in the case of the United States alone, of 76 raw materials classified as having strategic significance to our defense effort, over 60 are provided routinely through trade exchanges with other nations. Essentially all such trade is seaborne. International trade is clearly a two-way street, with mutual benefits for all trading partners. However, the more all-encompassing trade relations become, the more sensitive to disturbance the economic relations of nations become. Circumstances such as the closing of the traditional international waterway, new discoveries of oil and gas resources, or the undercutting of oceanic freight rates can and do have profound effects on the economic well-being of all trading nations.

Overall, then, I have suggested that there have been profound changes of far-ranging significance underway for the past two decades. We have begun to approach the oceans from a completely new perspective. No longer do we regard the seas only as a means of communications and trading highway—no longer can we approach the exploration of the great fishing grounds on an unscientific and uncoordinated basis—no longer will nations desperately in need of food and jobs be able or willing to ignore the riches within and beyond their tidal waters. But these changes have been changes of attitude and technology. Other changes of direct political and strategic significance are in the wind.

The United States has stood in a unique position among the nations of the free world ever since the confused days of the late 1940's. When World War II ended, it became clear that a return by the United States to the prewar policy of isolation was not possible. The events of 1948 and the final years of the Stalin regime confirmed our belief that to abandon our world neighbors to Russian expansionism would be indefensible and clearly contrary to our own interests. Without our continued involvement, we believe, there could be no deterrence of Soviet ambition. We

demonstrated our belief not only by the words of the Truman Doctrine, but by actions—economic, political, and military.

Analysis of the public statements of our President and his administration spokesman clearly indicates that a reorientation of U.S. national philosophy regarding the extent of our involvement in overseas affairs is now in progress. The arguments in support of a change from this philosophy are familiar to you all, as they have been thoroughly aired in our press and in our Congress. However, the President has made it clear in these statements that the United States will continue to honor its commitments.

I have outlined my views of the important changes which have taken place in the world maritime arena. Also, I have stated the fact of an ongoing reorientation of the U.S. national policy, because that policy has been significantly related to the application of seapower by all free world nations and must continue to affect all of them in their decisionmaking process.

What I hope to make clear is that there exists an opportunity here at this symposium to suggest responses to the challenges raised by this changing environment.

I believe that the single most important challenge is that raised by the growing Soviet presence on the seas in a role which is clearly antagonistic to the economic, political, and military interests of the free world. The Soviets claim that the challenge is aimed at the U.S. seapower—however, since it is clear to the Soviets that the entire free world community draws its strength and power from the sea and from its ability to use the sea, their challenge is really directed to us all. The Soviet challenge is based on a reasoned strategic appraisal and on hard lessons learned in the past—it will be implemented with all the resources available to the centralized control of the Soviet state.

The opportunities available to the free world to counter this challenge are many and variable. They *can and should* be attuned to the acceptance of the need for cooperative and coordinated efforts, on a regional or worldwide scale. Where possible, national efforts might be channeled in support of existing regional groupings and coordinated for maximum benefits to all regional partners through mutually acceptable regional organs.

This symposium offers an opportunity to sound out to what extent and in what directions free nations might be willing and able to undertake action in the attainment of common goals.

In conclusion, there are two principal

BIOGRAPHIC SUMMARY

Adm. Bernard A. Clarey, Vice Chief of Naval Operations, graduated from Annapolis in 1934 and began his naval career aboard the cruiser U.S.S. *Milwaukee*. In January of 1937 he undertook submarine training and was soon designated a submariner. As a submariner during World War II, he served in the Pacific aboard the submarines *Dolphin, Amberjack,* and *Pintado,* the latter of which he commanded during four war patrols. For his service in World War II, Admiral Clarey was awarded the Navy Cross and two gold stars in lieu of additional awards and the Silver Star Medal. Following World War II, he served in several positions in Washington, including duty in the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations and the Office of the Secretary of Defense. It was also during this period that he served as Executive Officer aboard the cruiser U.S.S. *Helena* and later as Commanding Officer of the fleet oiler *Hassayampa*. In July of 1959 he was promoted to the rank of rear admiral, and in July of 1962 he became Commander Submarine Force, Pacific Fleet. Promoted to vice admiral in 1964, Admiral Clarey served as Deputy Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet, and Commander Second Fleet before his promotion to the rank of admiral and his concurrent appointment as Vice Chief of Naval Operations on 17 January 1968.

points which I would commend to your consideration. First, the plenary sessions and committee discussions this week will be most effective if they develop the fullest exchange of views on the problems under discussion. Secondly, I would ask you to consider the possibility of continuing these discussions in the future, if they appear to be of value, to develop and exchange thoughts of the various aspects of maritime problems of the free world.

In closing, I wish to observe that we have all shared in common ventures before, and from that experience we know that naval officers share a bond of training and experience which permits them to accept new concepts readily—and that only in new assessments and fresh ideas is their real hope for enlarging on the common bond and the interest which links us all together.

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It is from the sea that we will realize our ultimate victory.

Herbert C. Bonner, June 1962